

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 002100

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ORIGIN NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-05 ISO-00 /012 R

66604

DRAFTED BY NEA/IAI:EWBIZIC:VF

1/6/75 EXT. 21481

APPROVED BY NEA/IAI:WTCLUVERIUS IV

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 002100

LIMDIS

FOR TREASURY ASSISTANT SECRETARY PARSKY

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC FROM TEL AVIV 03 JAN 75:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0025

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, IS, US

SUBJECT: U.S. /ISRAEL JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT

--POSSIBLE POSTPONEMENT OF MEETING

REF: TEL AVIV 6895

1. ISRAELI PRESS HAS CARRIED SEVERAL STORIES OVER LAST FEW DAYS STRESSING LACK OF PROGRESS IN JOINT COMMITTEE NEGOTIATIONS AND PREDICTING POSTPONEMENT OF MEETING NOW SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE IN WASHINGTON JAN 27-28. HAARETZ OF JAN 1, FOR EXAMPLE, CARRIED REPORT FROM ITS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT MARGALIT STATING THAT NO PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE ON FIVE UNRESOLVED SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OR IN FINDING SUITABLE AMERICAN BUSINESS MEN FOR ISRAEL/U.S. PUBLIC COUNCIL. STORIES ALSO NOTE THAT
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PAGE 02 STATE 002100

SECRETARY SIMON PLANS TO VISIT MIDDLE EAST IN FEBRUARY.

2. DAVAR OF JAN 3 REPORTED THAT FINANCE MINISTER RABINOWITZ TOLD ITS CORRESPONDENT THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH U.S. INCLUDING EFFORTS TO SET UP JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, "ARE NOT PROCEEDING SO WELL." RABINOWITZ REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HIS DEPARTURE FOR U.S. ON JAN 22 HAD BEEN POSTPONED AGAIN. HE REPORTEDLY ADDED THAT "IN CIRCUMSTANCES, PERHAPS WE SHOULD TRY TO SET UP SIMULTANEOUSLY JOINT TRADE COMMITTEES WITH EUROPE."

3. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THESE PRESS REPORTS ON JAN 3, DIRECTOR GENERAL AGMON, MINISTRY OF FINANCE, SAID THAT LACK OF PROGRESS IN REACHING AGREEMENT ON REMAINING FIVE ISSUES AND IN FORMATION OF PUBLIC COUNCIL HAD INDEED RAISED QUESTION ABOUT "PRACTICALITY OF HOLDING TO JANUARY DATE FOR FIRST MEETING." GOI WAS GENUINELY CONCERNED, HE SAID, THAT NO ANSWER HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM USG ON THESE UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS. MOREOVER, TWO ADDITIONAL FACTORS HAD ARISEN WHICH COULD AFFECT TIMING OF MEETING. CODEL INOUE WOULD ARRIVE ON JAN 24 AND WHILE RABINOWITZ COULD SEE THEM ON THAT DAY AND STILL GET TO WASHINGTON BY JAN 27, RABINOWITZ WOULD LIKE TO HAVE MORE TIME WITH THIS IMPORTANT GROUP OF SENATORS. THEN THERE WAS "RUMOR" THAT SECRETARY SIMON WOULD VISIT THIS AREA IN MID-FEBRUARY AND POSSIBLY VISIT ISRAEL ON FEB 19. HE SAID THAT SECRETARY SIMON WOULD OF COURSE BE WELCOME BUT, IF HIS VISIT TAKES PLACE, IT DOES RAISE QUESTION ABOUT DESIRABILITY OF JAN 27-28 MEETING IN WASHINGTON. AGMON CONCLUDED, HOWEVER, BY REITERATING THAT IF PROGRESS COULD BE MADE ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES, ISRAELI MINISTERS WOULD BE MORE THAN WILLING TO GO TO WASHINGTON THIS MONTH AS SCHEDULED.

4. COMMENT: WE FIND GOI'S BLATANT USE OF PRESS "LEAKS" AND STATEMENTS TO BE HIGHLY IRRITATING. THEY ARE AWARE THAT USG HAS MADE MAJOR EFFORT TO ACCOMMODATE ISRAELI DESIRES IN VARIOUS FIELDS AND THAT PACKAGE OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE TO ISRAEL HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED. THEY SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE THAT SOME OF REMAINING FIVE POINTS ARE TOO COMPLEX TO BE RESOLVED AS QUICKLY AS THEY DESIRE. THIS BEING SAID, WE ARE SOMEWHAT PUZZLED BY AGMON'S STATEMENT THAT "NO ANSWERS" HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM WASHINGTON ON CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 002100

OUTSTANDING ISSUES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ISRAELI EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES HAVE APPOINTMENTS IN STATE AND TREASURY NEXT WEEK AND WE RECOMMEND THAT THEY BE GIVEN CLEARER PICTURE OF WHAT CAN BE AGREED BY JAN 72 (NOTE: IN ADDITION TO SEEING CODEL INOUE, RABINOWITZ IS SCHEDULED TO HOST LUNCH ON JAN 24 FOR TIME "NEWSTORU" GROUP.) KEATING UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE002100
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EWBIZIC:VF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750005-0438
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750175/aaaacobb.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 TEL AVIV 6895
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 AUG 2003 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S. /ISRAEL JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT --POSSIBLE POSTPONEMENT OF MEETING
TAGS: EGEN, IS, US
To: KUWAIT
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006